



WATER FACTS

Become Sierra Aware

The Sierra Nevada provides approximately 65% of California's developed water.

Snowpack in the Sierra Nevada is California's largest reservoir of fresh water, with snowmelt alone providing an average of 15 million acre-feet of water each year. Each acre-foot of water equals approximately 326,000 gallons.

75% of California's rain and snow falls in the northern part of the State, with much of that coming from the Sierra, while 80% of the agricultural and urban water demand occurs in Central and Southern California.

Thirteen of the 24 core Sierra Nevada river basins supply water to the federal Central Valley Project, which irrigates 3,000,000 acres of Central Valley farmland and supplies urban uses, power generation and recreational uses in other parts of the state.

The State Water Project, built to deliver water from the Sierra Nevada's Feather River watershed, provides at least a portion of the water needs for roughly two-thirds of the state's population (or approximately 20 million Californians) in the San Joaquin Valley, the Bay Area, and metropolitan areas of Southern California.

75% of California's hydroelectric power, is generated in the Sierra Nevada.

The spring snowpack in the Sierra Nevada is projected by climate scientists to decline about 25-40% by mid-century. Toward the end of the century, losses could reach 30-70%.

Sierra Nevada reservoirs that form the headwaters of California's water projects are contaminated with mercury left over from gold mining.

20 of the 24 or 83% of major rivers in the Sierra Nevada had stretches that were closed to swimming at sometime in the past 5 years.

Water accounts for 60% of the total value of all natural products or services produced in the Region. The direct value of this water for irrigation, municipal and hydroelectric use is \$1.3 billion a year.

National Fish & Wildlife Foundation scientists say meadow restoration can result in 50,000 to 500,000 new acre feet of water availability during the late-summer dry season for human users and perennial stream flow. In addition to the water quantity and water quality benefits, meadow restoration increases plant and animal abundance and species diversity.